



Satellite image with enhanced low cloud-top temperatures (degrees C) for 7:15 a.m. EST (NOAA)

Agricultural Weather Highlights - Friday - February 21, 2003

- ***In the West***, isolated showers are confined to the ***northern Rockies and Pacific Northwest***. Despite recent precipitation, most areas ***west of the Rockies*** continue to experience a variety of drought-related effects, including low reservoir levels, stressed rangelands, and meager mountain snow packs.
- ***On the Plains***, the return of very cold weather to ***eastern Montana and North Dakota*** is increasing stress on livestock. Only light snow showers accompany the cold weather in ***eastern Montana's winter wheat areas***, where the crop's protective snow cover is patchy and today's temperatures are forecast to hover near 0 degrees F. Mild weather prevails elsewhere on the ***Plains***, accompanied by beneficial rain showers from ***Texas to southeastern Kansas***.
- ***In the Corn Belt***, melting snow and rain showers in the ***Ohio Valley*** are creating muddy conditions in fields and feedlots. Mild, dry weather prevails elsewhere in the ***Midwest***.
- ***In the South***, locally heavy showers and thunderstorms stretch from ***Texas to the southern Appalachians***, halting fieldwork and causing flash flooding, but boosting soil moisture reserves in preparation for spring planting.

Outlook: A developing storm system in the ***western Gulf Coast region*** will spark locally heavy rain from the ***southern Plains to the Delta*** today, and across the ***Tennessee Valley, Southeast, and Mid-Atlantic region*** during the weekend. The storm may trigger localized flooding, as rain falls on saturated soils and a deep snow pack. Meanwhile, heavy snow is likely across portions of the ***Ohio Valley, Great Lakes States, and New England***, as cold air arrives from the north. Elsewhere, rain and snow showers will persist along a frontal boundary in the ***Pacific Northwest and northern Rockies***, while dry weather will prevail in the ***Southwest***. The NWS 6-10 day outlook for February 26 - March 2 calls for above-normal precipitation across the ***southeastern quarter of the U.S.***, while drier-than-normal conditions are expected in the ***upper Midwest and Pacific Northwest***. Below-normal temperatures are forecast from the ***Rockies westward to the Pacific Coast***, while warmer-than-normal weather will prevail in ***Florida***.

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